

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
-----011710Z 008767 /43

O R 011655Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5222
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 01926

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, WB, GE, GW, UR, US
SUBJECT: WHERE WE GO FROM HERE ON BERLIN

BEGIN SUMMARY: WITH BERLIN AGAIN IN THE HEADLINES
WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT WHAT WE CAN BEST DO TO PRESERVE
THE ALLIED POSITION IN THE CITY AND TO PREVENT A
RESUMPTION OF BERLIN CRISES. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN
WHETHER THE CHALLENGES OF RECENT WEEKS WILL BE REPEATED,
BUT THERE ARE BASIC ELEMENTS IN THE BERLIN SITUATION
AND IN THE POLICIES OF THE NATIONS INVOLVED WHICH
COULD LEAD TO FUTURE TENSIONS AND EVEN CONFRONTATIONS.
WE PLAN TO EXAMINE IN DETAIL HERE SOME OF THE MEASURES
THAT WE CAN TAKE TO COUNTER ANY SOVIET-GDR STEPS. WE
BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF OUR
BERLIN POLICY MUST REMAIN A CATEGORICAL ASSERTION TO
THE SOVIET UNION THAT WE CANNOT HAVE A CONTINUATION OF
EAST-WEST DETENTE UNLESS BERLIN IS INCLUDED. WESTERN
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PUBLIC OPINION, ESPECIALLY AMERICAN AND GERMAN, COULD
NOT TOLERATE IT. END SUMMARY

1. RECENT EVENTS HAVE AGAIN BROUGHT BERLIN TO THE
FOREFRONT. THE GDR HAS APPLIED NEW VISA REGULATIONS
IN EAST BERLIN; EAST GERMANS POLICE HAVE BARRED AND ARE
STILL WATCHING VISITORS TO THE WEST GERMAN REPRESENTA-

TION; THE GDR MAY BE OBLITERATING ONE KEY DISTINCTION BETWEEN EAST BERLIN AND EAST GERMANY REGARDING THE ADOPTION OF GDR LEGISLATION. IN THE MEANTIME, THERE ARE SUGGESTIONS OF MORE TO COME (SUCH AS ABRASIMOV'S COMPLAINTS ABOUT US PATROLS), THOUGH THOSE SUGGESTIONS MAY BE PSYCHOLOGICAL RATHER THAN ACTUAL THREATS.

2. ONE CAN SPECULATE AT LENGTH ON SOVIET AND EAST GERMAN MOTIVES FOR RECENT ACTIONS. ONE EXPLANATION FOR THOSE ACTIONS IS THAT THEY REPRESENT SOME ADVANCE SOVIET COMPENSATION TO THE GDR PRIOR TO A NEW MOSCOW-BONN DEAL--IN WHICH CASE ONE COULD EXPECT MATTERS TO REST FOR NOW. ONE CAN ALSO IMAGINE, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS AND THE GDR HAVE DECIDED TO GO FURTHER AND TERMINATE ALLIED RIGHTS IN EAST BERLIN, WHICH WOULD MEAN A SERIOUS CONFRONTATION ON THIS PARTICULAR BERLIN FRONT AND WOULD IMPERIL DETENTE. THE TIMING MAY BE RELATED TO THE INTERREGNUM IN US AND FRG POLITICS, SINCE MOST OF THE STEPS CAME DURING THE WANING DAYS OF THE FORMER US ADMINISTRATION AND THE EARLY DAYS OF A NEW GERMAN GOVERNMENT.

3. WHATEVER THE REASONS FOR THE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS, ONE CANNOT AVOID CONSIDERING THAT OTHER PROBLEMS COULD WELL FOLLOW, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY SOON. THEY COULD FOLLOW NOT BECAUSE OF ANY PARTICULAR RECENT SOVIET DECISION, BUT SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE BERLIN PROBLEM AND THE LONGER-RANGE POLICIES OF THE NATIONS INVOLVED:

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--SOVIET ATTITUDES ON BERLIN, FOR EXAMPLE, APPEAR TO HAVE TOUGHENED PROGRESSIVELY SINCE THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT, ESPECIALLY OVER THE LAST YEAR. WHAT THE RUSSIANS CLEARLY WANT IS A FOUR-POWER STATUS FOR WEST BERLIN WHILE THE ALLIES ARE EXPELLED FROM EAST BERLIN (AT LEAST EXPELLED AS OCCUPIERS, WHILE REMAINING NORMAL DIPLOMATIC PARTNERS OF THE GDR). THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY INCLINED TO ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS IN THE WEST AND HAVE INCREASINGLY ASSERTED A RIGHT OF CO-DETERMINATION OVER THE WESTERN SECTORS IN ORDER TO PROTEST WEST GERMAN PRESENCE AND WEST GERMAN ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING SOME OF LONG STANDING.

--THE FRG ATTITUDE, IN DIRECT CONTRAST, HAS BEEN TO TRY TO INCREASE THE FRG-WEST BERLIN LINKS THAT CAN BE JUSTIFIED UNDER THE GENERAL SANCTION GIVEN BY THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT. SUCH LINKS HAVE A POSITIVE ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT IN WEST BERLIN, AND

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IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THE WESTERN ALLIES TO DISCOURAGE THE FRG WITHOUT PAYING A POLITICAL PRICE IN BERLIN AND IN RELATIONS TO BONN. THE SOVIETS, BY THREATENING STAGNATION OF OSTPOLITIK, HAVE MANAGED TO PRESSURE THE FRG TO FOREGO NEW PROPOSALS FOR ENHANCING ITS LINKS TO WEST BERLIN. THERE REMAINS ON THE AGENDA, HOWEVER, WEST BERLIN'S ADHERENCE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, A MUCH DESIRED DEVELOPMENT ON WHICH THE FRG CANNOT BACK OFF. WE ALSO WANT THAT, AS A VITAL ELEMENT OF THE CITY'S VIABILITY. THUS THERE EXISTS AN AREA OF POTENTIAL CONFRONTATION WITH MOSCOW.

--THE GDR, ONCE SURE HISTORY WOULD VALIDATE ITS POSITION ON THE BERLIN CHALLENGE, IS NOW NO LONGER SO CONFIDENT. IT PRESUMABLY COMPLAINS TO THE SOVIETS MORE AND MORE ABOUT FRG POLICIES IN WEST BERLIN AND ABOUT THE ALLIED PRESENCE IN EAST BERLIN. WHILE THE LATEST EPITHET THAT POLITICAL PUNDITS AFFLICT ON WEST BERLIN IS THAT OF A "DYING CITY", THE REALITY IS THAT THOSE
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WESTERN SECTORS CONTINUE TO OFFER AN IMAGE TO EAST GERMANS WITH WHICH THE GDR REGIME SIMPLY CANNOT COMPETE.

4. THE UNITED STATES FINDS ITSELF CONFRONTED WITH A DILEMMA. WE GUARANTEE THE SECURITY OF THE WESTERN SECTORS, AND WE BASE THAT GUARANTEE ON OUR RIGHTS AS THE VICTORS OF WORLD WAR II. THEREFORE, WE MUST CONTINUE TO ASSERT THE QUADRIPARTITE STATUS OF ALL OF BERLIN AND WE CANNOT RELINQUISH ALLIED RIGHTS IN THE EASTERN SECTOR WITHOUT SUFFERING A WEAKENING OF OUR AUTHORITY IN ALL OF BERLIN. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO THE WESTERN SECTORS MUST CONTINUE, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF OUR 1954 TREATY COMMITMENT TO THE FRG AND BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL SANCTION OFFERED BY THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT, BUT BECAUSE ONLY THE FRG CAN SUSTAIN THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY AND POLITICAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF THOSE SECTORS. THE RUSSIANS ARE VERY SENSITIVE TO THIS DILEMMA AND TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF IT IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH US. THEY MAY HOPE TO DRIVE US INTO POSITIONS WHICH CREATE FRICTION WITH THE FRG.

5. IT IS DIFFICULT THOUGH NOT IMPOSSIBLE--EITHER MILITARILY OR DIPLOMATICALLY--TO MEET IN BERLIN ITSELF THE SOVIET-GCR CHALLENGES TO THE STATUS OF THE CITY AND TO FRG-BERLIN TIES. THIS IS PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE TACTICAL WEAKNESS THAT OUR EXPOSED POSITION IN BERLIN REPRESENTS. IT IS ALSO BECAUSE OF THE WAY THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT WAS WRITTEN; EXCEPT FOR THE TRANSIT AND ACCESS PROVISIONS, WHICH WE HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT, OUR RIGHTS ARE NOT AS SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED AND ASSERTED AS THOSE OF THE SOVIETS. WE ARE TAKING A SERIOUS LOOK AT POSSIBLE LEGAL COUNTERMEASURES AND WILL REPORT ON THEM SEPARATELY, BUT WE DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD IN THEMSELVES SERVE AS EFFECTIVE DETERRENTS.

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6. WE ARE NOT, HOWEVER, WITHOUT RECOURSE. THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUPPORT WE CAN GIVE BERLIN IS TO TIE IT FULLY INTO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT IS A CREATURE OF DETENTE, JUST AS THE PREVIOUS BERLIN CRISES HAD BEEN CREATURES OF THE COLD WAR. WE WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THAT AGREEMENT IF THE SOVIETS HAD NOT BEEN INTERESTED IN CSCE, SALT, MBFR,

AND THE MOSCOW TREATY. ONE OF THE REASONS, WE BELIEVE, FOR RECENT BERLIN PROBLEMS HAS BEEN THE SLOWING OF THE PROCESS OF DETENTE AND THE SOVIET BELIEF THAT BERLIN CAN BE DECOUPLED FROM IT, ESPECIALLY IN THE SENSE OF AROUSING FRG SENSIBILITIES WITHOUT CONFRONTING THE WESTERN ALLIES. MOREOVER, RECENT TENSIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE MAY HAVE GIVEN THE GDR MORE CHANCE TO INVEIGH IN MOSCOW AGAINST CONTINUING EXCHANGES OF VISITORS AND AGAINST WESTERN PRESENCE. THEREFORE, ONE OF THE IMPERATIVES OF ANY AMERICAN BERLIN POLICY MUST BE TO ASSERT CONSISTENTLY THAT THERE CAN BE NO EAST-WEST DETENTE THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE BERLIN.

7. WE HAVE, PERHAPS, LESS ASSETS WITH THE GDR THAN WITH THE SOVIET UNION. WE HAVE GIVEN THE GDR WHAT IT WANTED MOST FROM US--RECOGNITION--AND IT WAS ON THE WAY TO THAT RECOGNITION THAT THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED. IT IS IRONIC THAT THE GDR NOW USES THE FACT OF OUR RECOGNITION AS AN ARGUMENT TO ASSERT ITS OWN SOVEREIGNTY OVER EAST BERLIN. SUCH OTHER LEVERAGE AS WE HAVE, E.G., IN TRADE AND CONTACTS, IS DIFFICULT TO

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USE EXCEPT IN A CRISIS. IT CANNOT, THEREFORE, STEM

GRADUAL EROSION OF OUR BERLIN POSITION.

8. THE FRG, HOWEVER, STILL HAS MUCH TO OFFER THE GDR. IN THE PAST YEAR, WEST GERMAN OFFICIALS HAVE TALKED TO US CONFIDENTLY ABOUT THE POLITICAL CONCESSIONS THEY COULD GET IN 1977 FOR AN ADDITIONAL DM 1 BILLION IN CREDITS TO THE GDR. HOWEVER, THAT LEVERAGE HAS UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN REDUCED BY GDR AWARENESS THAT TOO MUCH CONTACT WITH THE WEST SAPS ITS INTERNAL SECURITY. THIS HAS LOWERED FRG EXPECTATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, FRG REPRESENTATIVE GAUS LAST WEEK TOLD BERLIN CHARGE POLANSKY AND THE BONN POLITICAL COUNELOR THAT THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC WAS CONSIDERING A CREDIT OF DM 700 MILLION BUT HE DID NOT LIST ANY NEW EAST GERMAN CONCESSIONS IN EXCHANGE, THOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY EXPECTED SOME PAY-OFF BY STRENGTHENING THE POSITIONS OF THOSE GDR OFFICIALS WHO HAVE AN INTEREST IN GOOD RELATIONS WITH BONN. MOREOVER, SOME EAST GERMAN CONCESSIONS WILL BE SECRET

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REQUIRED TO GET THE GERMAN PARLIAMENT TO AGREE TO FURTHER CREDITS.

9. IN FACT, THE GDR NOW MAY FEEL LESS RESTRAINED IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE FRG THAN IN ITS ACTIONS TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. DURING THAT SAME CONVERSATION LAST WEEK, GAUS SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THERE WOULD BE CONTINUING TENSION IN FRG-GDR RELATIONS BECAUSE OF INTERNAL GDR DISPUTES ABOUT WHAT THE GDR CAN AND CANNOT TOLERATE IN THE WAY OF WESTERN PRESENCE, CONTACTS, AND ACTIVITIES. NONETHELESS, GAUS SAID HE DOUBTED THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR WISHED TO CONFRONT THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION OVER BERLIN.

10. MUCH DEPENDS, THEREFORE, ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE SOVIET UNION ITSELF IS PREPARED TO RESTRAIN THE GDR OR, CONVERSELY, TO LET IT GO. IN THIS REGARD, THE GDR HAS TAKEN A NUMBER OF STEPS THAT HAVE ERODED THE QUADRIPARTITE STATUS OF EAST BERLIN BUT THAT HAVE NOT BROUGHT ABOUT THE SAME KIND OF DIRECT PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE UNITED STATES THAT MIGHT RESULT FROM A STOPPAGE OF WESTERN PATROLS INTO THE SOVIET SECTOR. SUCH A STEP WOULD REPRESENT A QUANTUM JUMP IN THE SOVIET READINESS TO CONFRONT US OPENLY. IT MIGHT COME, OF COURSE, BUT THE SOVIETS MUST RECOGNIZE THAT IT WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS.

11. WE THINK THIS ARGUES FOR USING EVERY OPPORTUNITY DURING THE EARLY MONTHS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TO

MAKE CLEAR TO THE SOVIET UNION THAT WE CONTINUE TO
REGARD BERLIN AS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN DETENTE. THE
VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO BERLIN UNDERLINED THIS POINT
DRAMATICALLY AND EFFECTIVELY. WE BELIEVE THAT FURTHER
UNDERLINING OF IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL. FOR EXAMPLE,
THOUGH WE DOUBT WHETHER THE SOVIET UNION WILL TELL
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THE GDR TO RETURN TO ITS TRADITIONAL PROCEDURES FOR
APPLYING EAST GERMAN LAWS IN THE EASTERN SECTOR OF
BERLIN, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO CONTINUE TO MAKE
CLEAR TO THE SOVIET UNION THAT WE WATCH THESE KINDS OF
ACTIONS AS LITMUS TESTS OF THE GENERAL ATTITUDE THAT
MOSCOW SHOWS TOWARD US AND, OF COURSE, AS AN INFLUENCE
ON THE ATTITUDES THAT WE WILL SHOW.
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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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